

TRIBUTE TO JUDGE MICHAEL M.
MIHM

HON. RAY LaHOOD

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 21, 2004

Mr. LAHOOD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Judge Michael M. Mihm on receiving the USAID Outstanding Citizen Achievement Award. The award recognizes volunteerism in overseas development context. In January 1994, Judge Mihm was appointed the first chairperson of the Committee on International Judicial Relations by Chief Justice William Rehnquist. In 2000, he was approached by the Librarian of Congress, Dr. James Billington, to help design an expanded rule of law component for the Library of Congress' Open World Leadership Center. Judge Mihm has hosted three Open World delegations at his home. He continues to serve as the Russian liaison for the Committee on International Judicial Relations to the Open World Partnership. Judge Mihm also provides voluntary counsel to Open World and USAID's Russian American Judicial Partnership.

Judge Mihm has dedicated several years of his time to the Committee on International Judicial Relations and the Open World program. I am happy to recognize him for his work and dedication to these programs.

HONORING STUDENTS AROUND
NEW YORK CITY WHO PARTICI-
PATED IN THE CONSTITUTION
EDUCATION AND ENGAGEMENT
PROJECT

HON. ANTHONY D. WEINER

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 21, 2004

Mr. WEINER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to the over 100 students from around New York City who participated this year in the Constitution Education Engagement Project. The CEEP program, of which Carl Bonomo is the founder and Dorothy McCloskey is the director, takes secondary school students from around New York City and asks them to have hearings, discussions and debates and arrive at a piece of legislation for this Congress to consider.

This year, the winner was from Wadleigh Secondary School. Karen Watts, Wadleigh's principal, led a group of students that represents the City's best and brightest: Vanessa Reyes, Aaron Gardner, Evelin Valladared, and Victoria Bunn. In addition, I want to mention individuals who deserve special commendation at two other schools that participated in CEEP: principal Joseph Zaza at the Leon M. Goldstein School and Susan Getting and Maureen Longeran at the Townsend Harris School.

The legislation that the Wadleigh team has come up with addresses problems that affect over 41 States in the United States, and that is the inequity between funding among different school districts. In New York State alone, \$17,000 is spent per student in one district compared to \$6,000 per student in others.

Since 1973, 45 different States have had to address the inequities in school funding. The

students at the Wadleigh Secondary School deserve our thanks for their efforts to address the problems we have in our country through the legislative process.

I hope this House joins in paying tribute to their successes.

EQUAL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY ACT
(EEOA)

To provide equal access to quality education to all United States Citizens and Residents

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE AND TABLE OF
CONTENTS

(a) This Act may be cited as EEOA of 2004
(b) Table of Contents. The table of contents for this act is as follows:

Sec. 1. Short Title and table of contents

Sec. 2. Abstract

Sec. 3. The EEOA

Title 1. Quality Education—Requirement to provide quality education to all citizens and residents.

Sec. 101. Definition of Quality Education

Sec. 102. Establishing a Uniform Standard

Title II. Funding—Establish permanent funding source that will allow goals of act to be met.

Sec. 201. Establishing special fund for act

Sec. 202. Increasing education expenditures on an adjusted per student basis

SECTION 2. ABSTRACT

We live in a time when only the educated are free. As we become more technologically advanced and information plays more of a critical role, only those individuals who have had a sound education will be able to compete and succeed in the global marketplace. This need for a quality education is most critical for those people who are on the lowest social and economic levels of our society. Now more than ever all must have access to a good education in order to have a fair chance in life. Sadly, those who are most in need of quality education have the least amount of access to it.

The 14th Amendment to the United States Constitution provides that every citizen will have equal protection of the law, but a Supreme Court decision in the case of *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896) almost erased the protections provided by this amendment. The *Plessy* decision created the system of separate but equal and allowed for the legal separation of people based upon nothing but the color of their skin. This ruling allowed for the establishment of separate school facilities for white people and people of color. These facilities were anything but equal. Schools that served students of color were inferior in many important aspects. The physical conditions of the schools were poor, books and other materials were in poor condition, outdated or not available at all. The teachers were paid less than their white counterparts. The landmark ruling in the Supreme Court case of *Brown v. the Board of Education* (1954) ended the practice of legal segregation in public schools and struck down the Jim Crow laws that forced second-class citizenship on people of color. Despite this, American society in many ways remains as segregated as it was before 1954. Nowhere is this segregation more evident than in our public schools. Even though great people such as Charles Hamilton Houston the architect of the argument for the *Brown* case, Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall, and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., dedicated their lives to ensure that there would be equal educational opportunities for all Americans, we have yet to see this become a reality.

Recent studies show that the country's largest inner city school districts remain dramatically divided along lines of race and

economic class. These studies find that the poorest school districts have a population that consists mostly of minority students while white students make up the majority of the wealthy districts. The difference in the funding received by school districts is also very surprising. In New York State alone, \$17,000 is spent per student in the wealthiest districts while only \$6000 per student is spent in the poorest districts. This stark difference led to the creation of the Campaign for fiscal Equity (CFE), a group of parents, businessmen and politicians who sued the state of New York to get more funding for the poorer school districts. After a long battle that lasted for several years, the New York State Courts ruled that the state must provide equal funding to those poor school districts. But New York is not the only state where we see this type of inequality—41 out of 50 states in the country have a similar situation.

Unequal funding has had a direct impact on the academic achievement of under funded schools and students. Students who attend schools located in districts that receive less funding also have lower scores on standardized tests and are more likely to be below grade level in reading and math. Students from these under-funded schools are also more likely to drop out of school and fewer students from these attend and graduate from college.

Recently, the federal government has tried to address the problem by the passing the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). NCLB requires all school districts to achieve minimum academic standards as measured by standardized tests. Those states whose school districts do not meet these standards would lose some of their federal funds. The NCLB Act has been criticized because it does not provide the funding that schools would need to meet the standards set by the law. In fact, those school districts whose students are the most in need of additional funding would likely be the first ones to lose funding if their students, who also have the greatest academic deficits, do not achieve satisfactory scores. Many parts are NCLB are good and should be expanded, but a couple of the things that the law does not do is provide funding that is substantial enough to achieve it's goals, and it does not require that states provide equal funding. It is the goal of the EEOA to address the problems that NCLB does not.

SECTION 3. THE EQUAL EDUCATIONAL
OPPORTUNITY ACT

Title I.—Quality Education For All Citizens and Residents. The federal government will be required to ensure that every child within the borders of the United States is provided with the opportunity to receive a "quality educational experience."

Sec. 101. Definition of "Quality Education"—For the purposes of this Act, a "quality education" will be defined as: (1) An education that provides each student the opportunity to develop the skills that are necessary to become a productive member of their local, national and global communities. (2) Developing the skills and knowledge necessary to effectively participate in the global marketplace. (3) Adequate physical facilities to meet the demands of the uniform distribution of funds. (4) Well-trained certified teachers who are paid at a competitive rate. (5) Providing a variety of learning experiences that include opportunities for extracurricular interests and social development.

Sec. 102. Establishing a Uniform Standard—To ensure that each child receives a quality education this act shall establish a framework for the equitable distribution of funding to create the programs and curriculum necessary to meet the goals of a